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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2026

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KISL](#) [KIRF](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: A/DCM DISCUSSES USG REVIEW OF SAUDI TEXTBOOKS WITH  
MFA

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission David Rundell for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) A/DCM solicited continued SAG cooperation in support of a USG review of Saudi textbooks during an October 9 meeting with Minister Plenipotentiary Hazem Karakotly, assistant to Director General for International Organization Affairs Ambassador Dr. Turki bin Mohammed Saud al-Kabir al Saud. A/DCM requested assistance in obtaining textbooks, conveying that this issue has generated substantial interest in the U.S. and continues to be a topic of discussion within the framework of the Strategic Dialogue. A/DCM noted a May 2006 Freedom House report that indicated little progress had been made in revising Saudi textbooks to delete intolerant references. He pointed out that the USG would prefer to conduct its own review rather than rely on the findings of the Freedom House report. A/DCM said that the USG has reviewed 2002 and 2003 textbooks, but emphasized the necessity for reviewing current textbooks -- both to show progress, as well as to identify problem areas. A/DCM said that the primary focus should be on geography, history, and religious textbooks.

¶2. (C) Karakotly indicated that he thought some textbooks had already been passed to the USG, but promised to check to see that this was the case. He stated that there has been some progress on textbook revisions, insisting that "we are more concerned about this than you are." Karakotly emphasized the SAG's commitment to religious tolerance by pointing out the King's ongoing promotion of dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, Karakotly also claimed that the "situation in the Middle East" is the primary factor contributing to terrorism.

¶3. (C) A/DCM agreed that there had been some progress, but emphasized the criticality of changing the mindset of teachers in addition to revising textbooks. He stated that extremists are using a twisted interpretation of Islam to justify their actions, emphasizing that this is harmful to all -- Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Karakotly agreed, stating that he would follow up on the textbook review issue with Prince Turki.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Although textbook revision would be considered a domestic issue in most countries, the inclusion of intolerant language in Saudi textbooks clearly has international implications -- particularly since so many Saudi students focus their efforts on religious studies. Removing an intolerant, violence prone interpretation of Islam from Saudi schools remains a Mission priority. END COMMENT.

